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THE



# Counsellor

PUBLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS IN THE INTERESTS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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EDMONTON, ALBERTA

October, 1960

## MUNICIPAL CONVENTIONS COMING UP

### UAM MEET AT LETHBRIDGE

Preparations for the two big annual conventions are well under-way according to reports from E. Newman, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union of Alberta Municipalities, and Mrs. M. Smith, Secretary - Treasurer of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties. Both organizations are anticipating "better and busier" conventions than ever before. The two conventions ... the UAM being held in Lethbridge October 26, 27 and 28, and the AAMD from November 15 to 18 in Edmonton ... are expected to have an important bearing on public affairs in Alberta throughout the coming year.

Details of the Association Convention have not yet been released but the program for the 56th Annual Convention of the Union of Alberta Municipalities has been mailed out by Mr. Newman.

Features of the latter convention are an address by Hon. A. J. Hooke, Minister of Municipal Affairs, on Industrial and Utility Taxation and a report of the activities of the Provincial-Municipal Advisory Committee by Mayor J.M. McAfee of Red Deer, one of the Union representatives on the Committee. Mr. Hooke's address, slated for October 27 will be followed by "an open discussion" of the subject.

Other Cabinet ministers addressing the Union Convention are Hon. L.C. Halmrast, Minister of Agriculture, speaking about civil defence; Hon. A.O. Aalborg, Minister of Education; and Hon. Gordon Taylor, Minister of Highways. Both Mr. Hooke and Mr. Aalborg will be replying to an address on the brief prepared not long ago concerning the cost of education, while Mr. Taylor will address delegates at their Friday luncheon.

Healthy discussion of these subjects as well as of a substantial number of resolutions is expected by Dr. F.M. Smith, President of the urban organization. Early announcements point out that the resolution committee will be in session throughout Wednesday in order that this major part of the Convention will be fully prepared. Delegates are invited to bring their wives as "a program is also being arranged for them".

Business meeting and the election of officers will be held at 3 p.m. on Friday, October 28, with a dinner that evening bringing the Convention to a close.

#### PUBLIC HEARINGS IN NOVEMBER

### COMMITTEE REQUESTS BRIEFS

Public meetings of the Special Areas Investigation Committee will be held at Hanna, Consort and Oyen towards the end of November, according to a recent statement by Wallace R. Hanson, Committee Chairman. He said specific dates will be announced within the next two weeks.

First meeting of the Committee with the Special Areas Board was held at Hanna on September 12, Mr. Hanson stated. Committee members and G.G. Rourke, Secretary, accompanied the Special Areas Board on a two day tour of inspection which covered all sections of the Special Areas.

Mr. Hanson said the Committee hoped that interested persons and organizations would prepare written submissions outlining their suggestions in connection with the administration of the Special Areas. Those who planned to make representations, he continued, are requested to mail four copies of their briefs to Mr. Rourke at the Committee Office in the Highways Building. Copies of the terms of reference governing the investigation are available upon request from the same source.

Alberta Association of Municipal  
Districts and Counties

#### CONVENTION CALL

The 52nd Annual Convention of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties will be held in the Macdonald Hotel, Edmonton on November 15, 16, 17 and 18, 1960.

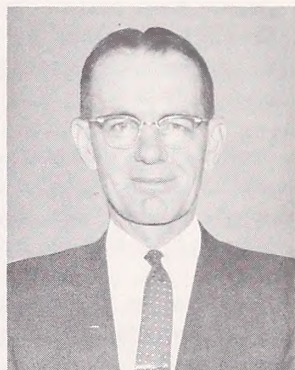
Efforts are being made to make these four days both educational and enjoyable for all who attend. Anyone interested in Municipal Government is cordially invited. Delegates should come prepared to stay for the entire convention.

As in the past two years a social evening will be held on Tuesday and the banquet and dance on Thursday evening. The usual entertainment is being prepared for the ladies.

This meeting will likely attract much interest from outside of our own memberships. Therefore, hotel space will be at a premium. It would be advisable to make your reservations now.

I shall be pleased to see you at the Convention.

J. M. McKay, President



### WINTER PROJECTS APPROVED

Construction of a civic administration building for the City of Grande Prairie was the first project to be approved by the Province under this year's Municipal Winter Works Incentive Program, according to W.D. Isbister, Assistant Chief Municipal Inspector with the Department of Municipal Affairs. The new structure is estimated to cost in excess of \$80,000. In addition to Grande Prairie's application, several others now await federal approval.

New effective date for commencing winter works is October 15 and it is expected that many Alberta municipalities will have projects underway at that time or shortly after. Announcement of the accelerated starting date was welcomed both by provincial and municipal officials here as a chance to get their local programs in shape before the onset of severe winter weather.

#### TOWN AND VILLAGE COUNCILS HOLD

### FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

A resolution seeking the privilege of increasing the number of councillors in villages to five members from the present three was approved by some thirty-three mayors, councillors and secretary-treasurers who met September 8 at Crossfield for the first Regional Conference of Town and Village Councils. The resolution embodied one of many topics discussed by the gathering and will be presented to the convention of the Union of Alberta Municipalities being held at Lethbridge later this month.

The Crossfield meeting was attended by municipal officials as far distant as Turner Valley, Strathmore, Gleichen and Delburne. Departmental officials present were Bruce Ramsay, Chief Municipal Inspector; W.D. Isbister, Assistant Chief; Leo Maurice, Senior In-

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THE

SECOND

PAGE . . .

THANKSGIVING DAY

We thank Thee, Lord, for giving us  
Thy gift of bread and meat.  
We thank Thee, too—a little more—  
That we are here to eat!  
Leverett Lyon

BEG YOUR PARDON

Regretfully we reproduce the contents of a letter which was hastily mailed to secretary-treasurers soon after the publication of our September issue. It read like this:

Dear Sir or Madam:

It has been drawn to our attention that a mistake has inadvertently been made in the dates shown for nominations, elections, etc. as listed in the Secretary's Calendar in the August and September issues of The Alberta Municipal Counsellor.

While we are sure that you are aware that these lists are intended to serve as a guide over which the various Acts take precedent, we feel that the error should be brought to your attention and ask that you make the following changes:

- (a) September 5 - Summer Village councillors assume office first Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Section 23(4) (c) - Change to September 3.
- (b) September 17 - Post notice of nomination meeting - Section 129(2) - Change to September 22.
- (c) September 23 - Nomination meeting - Section 129(1) - Change to September 28.
- (d) September 25 - Post notice of Poll (if required) - Section 137 - Change to September 30.
- (e) October 14 - Election Day - Section 134(2) - Change to October 19.
- (d) October 26 - First statutory Meeting - Section 46(1) - Change to October 31.
- (e) Under the section captioned "Assessment Act" the adoption of the current years assessment should be changed from Section 17(1) to Section 16 and publication and notification of preparation of the roll should be Section 30(1) and not Section 30(4).

Now there isn't much we can add to the above except our regrets for the circumstances which made it necessary. Since we were very young we've been well aware of the value of accuracy. News must be factual; views based on impeccable logic; statistics right on the button. Otherwise, these things are worse than worthless.

We'll keep trying, of course. But we shall make no shining promises.  
Mistrakes, we have found, do happen.

TIME MARCHES ON

It's four years this month since we featured what we called an "Organizational Chart", replete with a gallery of portraits of gentlemen helping to administer the Department of Municipal Affairs. With no greater purpose than keeping such matters up to date, this month we've done it again. The current version appears on page 5.  
Comparing this with the original (circa 1956) it will be noticed at once that several names and faces have been replaced. Three have left the Department to go forward to bigger and better things. One has been transferred, while one has retired. As for the others: a few changes in titles, some slight adjustment in responsibilities. Of these

we examined the four-year old portraits with extreme care and in most cases could find little or no reason for retakes. All in all, the years between have dealt kindly with most of us.

In such matters, of course, four years cannot be considered a long time. Nevertheless, every day does bring changes. In comparing the two layouts, we find it remarkable that so few are discernible.

THE CHANGING SCENE

Changes in the list of municipal officials noted during the past few months include the following:

VILLAGE OF BURDETT	
Mayor .....	R. Clark
SUMMER VILLAGE OF BETULA BEACH	
Mayor .....	H.W. Sprague
Secretary-Treasurer .....	Mrs. W.M. Smith 11251-57 St., Edmonton
VILLAGE OF COUTTS	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	Mrs. M.L. Ostby
Mayor .....	A.L. Horner
VILLAGE OF ENTWISTLE	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	Mrs. B. McArthur
SUMMER VILLAGE OF GHOST LAKE	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	W.B. Kelly
VILLAGE OF INNISFREE	
Mayor .....	W. Kravetz
SUMMER VILLAGE OF ITASKA BEACH	
Mayor .....	H.L. Leitch 10611-147 St., Edmonton
VILLAGE OF RYCROFT	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	W. Pearson Box 297
SUMMER VILLAGE OF SANDY BEACH	
Mayor .....	B.T. Clutterham 11214-105 St., Edmonton
SUMMER VILLAGE OF SEBA BEACH	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	C.D. Denney 9017-98 St., Edmonton
VILLAGE OF WASKATENAU	
Mayor .....	W.J. Chaba
TOWN OF ATHABASCA	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	T.B. Cumming
TOWN OF BARRHEAD	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	J.J. Part
TOWN OF GLEICHEN	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	W.E. Duncan
TOWN OF GRANDE CENTRE	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	N.C. Crawford
TOWN OF McMURRAY	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	G.E. Bussieres
TOWN OF PEACE RIVER	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	B.F.J. Macrory
TOWN OF PICTURE BUTTE	
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer .....	Mrs. M. Olsen
TOWN OF SUNDRE	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	Mrs. E.M. Taylor
TOWN OF VULCAN	
Secretary-Treasurer .....	M.K. Sinclair

THIS MONTH

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THE ROLE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN

# ALBERTA'S ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

BY J. B. LAIDLAW, ASSESSMENT COMMISSIONER;  
CHAIRMAN, ASSESSMENT EQUALIZATION BOARD

A PAPER SUBMITTED BY MR. LAIDLAW FOR PANEL DISCUSSION DURING THE 1960 CONVENTION OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ASSESSING OFFICERS, HELD SEPTEMBER 20, AT DENVER, COLORADO

During our 1959 Convention in Philadelphia when we discussed the preparation and use of an assessor's manual it was my privilege to describe procedures adopted in the Province of Alberta. In dealing with the subject of State and Provincial Assistance to local assessors, may I once again draw upon our experiences in Alberta and relate to you some of the details of our present program in this regard.

The interest of good government is best served when public officials, because of a high standard of education and training, are capable of discharging their duties in the most efficient manner possible. Alberta has always endeavored to recognize this principle which perhaps results in our standard or provincial assistance to municipal assessors being at a higher level than obtains in other Canadian Provinces.

Throughout Canada so far as I am aware, assessors invariably are appointed rather than elected officials; therefore the matter of educational qualifications and training is much too often considered the sole responsibility of the local municipality and one in which the senior government should not be (and is not, in too many instances) greatly concerned. It may be of interest to note here that while certain of our provincial governments provide assessment manuals and lend direction and supervision in varying degrees, others prescribe no standardized procedures whatsoever.

The property tax, being the chief source of revenue available to municipalities, is normally the only major tax administered by local governments. It is of great importance therefore that this levy be imposed equitably and in accordance with sound principles and practices. Of equal importance however is the assessment function, and unless it is efficiently carried out on the basis of an accepted standard, local government is immediately faced with unsurmountable difficulties.

## ALBERTA THEN and NOW

By way of explanation in connection with certain remarks to follow may I say that Alberta is a young province having been in existence only since 1905. In our earlier years of development, it may be said that the assessor was usually the first individual available and was prepared to undertake whatever duties might be required of him. The basis on which value was determined rested pretty much on his judgment and the levy imposed was in accordance with revenues necessary to meet expenditures of the day. Over the years many different bases of assessment were employed and for some time no concerted effort was made by the Provincial Government or municipalities with a view to bringing about proper uniformity.

Since the year 1926 the Provincial Government has paid grants annually to municipalities to assist in financing major services such as education, road construction and health needs. For the reason that these grants were invariably allocated on the basis of a formula which employed the use of property assessments as a prime factor, municipalities were therefore inclined to try and maintain a low level of assessment thereby qualifying for a greater amount of grant-in-aid than they could otherwise be fairly entitled to receive.

In recent years, however, this practice no longer benefits municipalities since Government grants are based upon an equalized assessment. Regardless then of the year or level of value which a municipality may employ for assessment purposes, the assessment of such municipality will be adjusted by way of equalization to a common level. As a result, all municipalities are now more than anxious to adopt the standards and methods of valuation prescribed for use throughout the Province. There still remains, however, much to be done.

Alberta has lately become an industrialized Province with industry now diversified and decentralized. Over the past ten years particularly, new industries have established in both rural and urban areas. An industry situated in a rural or semiurban area is subject to assessment on land, buildings and fixed equipment while an industry located in an urban area such as a city enjoys exemption from assessment with respect to equipment but pays in lieu thereof a business tax in addition to a tax on land and buildings. At the present time these discrepancies are being carefully studied with a view to obtaining a

greater measure of uniformity in respect of industrial assessments.

I mention these points only to emphasize the need of a well-trained staff of assessors if we are ever to arrive at the place where property taxation is such that each individual or corporate property owner will pay into municipal coffers only his or its fair share of revenue required.

## ASSISTANCE from the PROVINCE

Speaking now of provincial assistance rendered to Alberta assessing officers I may say that such centers around the following four avenues of approach:

1. Centralized Control including Supervision and Inspection.
2. Prescribed Assessment Standards and Procedures.
3. In-Service Training, and
4. An Assessment Principles Course.

Acting on the recommendations of a Royal Commission reporting on Taxation, the Alberta Government in 1949 authorized the establishment of an Assessment Branch whose personnel would be available to those municipalities requiring the part-time services of a qualified and experienced assessor. This action probably stemmed from the conclusion that assessment uniformity could best be achieved by bringing assessors under the supervision and guidance of a central authority. Furthermore, municipalities had always been handicapped by a serious lack of qualified appraisal personnel and it was considered that if the provincial government established a pool of trained assessors these people might eventually become permanent employees of municipalities thereby alleviating the previous shortage on the one hand and at the same time raising the assessment standard on the other. Legislation was introduced whereunder the Provincial Government shared a portion of the assessment cost in urban areas only but this arrangement has since been changed to include all municipalities with the Province now absorbing approximately fifty percent of the cost of any reassessment program provided -

- (a) the qualifications of the assessor are acceptable.
- (b) a performance bond has been posted, and
- (c) the work completed by the assessor has been carried out in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Assessment Manual and is acceptable to the municipality and to the Provincial Assessment Commissioner.

Perhaps the important feature of this type of assistance in addition to its financial benefit to municipalities, lies in the fact that the Provincial Government is directly interested in the quality of the work performed.

## RESPONSIBILITY OF ASSESSMENT COMMISSIONER

The direction and supervision of the assessment program for all Alberta municipalities is the sole responsibility of the Provincial Assessment Commissioner. He is in fact the central authority charged with the responsibility of providing standards and methods and formulating policies leading to general assessment uniformity.

This is the second important phase of provincial assistance to assessors. Through adequate supervision available whenever required and by provision of up-to-date standards and methods of assessment procedure, a large portion of the assessor's burden is thus shifted to a senior government more properly equipped to deal with such matters.

To facilitate his efforts the Assessment Commissioner maintains a research division as well as an assessment inspection branch. The research division through its analysts produces and revises our assessment manual, assists assessors with problems for which no standard approach is possible, and in general serves as a clearing house for information and new developments in the assessment field. Assessment inspectors continually check on the quality and equity of property values and on completion of a reassessment program ensure that resulting assessments are in substantial conformity with prescribed standards and the law. They also act in a supervisory capacity should municipal assessors desire assistance and as well investigate complaints placed by ratepayers and municipalities alike and recommend measures deemed necessary to rectify any inequity which might be evidenced. Whenever an inspection report is filed copies of same are immediately

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# THE LOCAL SCENE AND THE DEPARTMENT

## A SUMMARY OF ALBERTA'S 254 URBAN AND 99 RURAL MUNICIPAL UNITS . . . AND THE BRANCHES OR OFFICES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

In order to understand the work of the Department of Municipal Affairs we should be familiar with the general organization of local government in Alberta. The following outline indicates the composition and organization of the various urban and rural administrative units.

### URBAN

#### 158 Villages\*

- (1) Before requesting incorporation as a village, a hamlet or settlement must have not less than fifty occupied dwellings.
- (2) The affairs of a village are administered by three councillors, one elected each year for three years.
- (3) Mayor must be one of the councillors, chosen each year by themselves.
- (4) All other officials are appointed by the council.

\* This includes 19 summer villages. In this connection The Town and Village Act states: "The Minister may, either of his own motion or upon receipt of a petition, form any summer resort into a summer village, irrespective of the separate buildings contained therein." The petition referred to must be signed by ten persons who would be on the assessment roll.

#### 87 Towns

- (1) To apply for incorporation as a town a village must have a population of 700.
- (2) A town council consists of the mayor and six councillors.
- (3) The mayor is elected for two years.
- (4) Two councillors are elected each year for two years.
- (5) All other officials are appointed by council.

#### 9 Cities\*

- (1) In effect since January 1, 1952, The City Act governs the activities of all cities in the Province. Previously, each city was governed by an individual charter granted by a private Act of the Legislative Assembly.
- (2) To qualify for city status, a town must have a population in excess of 6,000.
- (3) Must have not less than six or more than twenty aldermen, of an even number (usually 8 or 10 in practice), half of whom are elected each year for a term of two years.
- (4) The mayor of a city is elected for two years.
- (5) All other officials are appointed by the council.

\* Not including the City of Lloydminster (located on both sides of the Alberta-Saskatchewan boundary) which has its own charter, ratified by both Provincial Governments. The City is administered by its elected council under Saskatchewan laws.

### RURAL

#### 49 Improvement Districts

These comprise the outlying lands in the Province which are not sufficiently developed to warrant a local council and are under the direct administration of the Department of Municipal Affairs, assisted by other government departments.

#### 2 Special Areas

Some 5,000,000 acres in the Hanna, Consort and Oyen districts are designated as the Special Areas and are administered by a Board appointed by the Department of Municipal Affairs and responsible to it. Headquarters of the Board are in Hanna. The members of the Board live in the area concerned in order to keep in close touch with the ratepayers.

#### 36 Municipal Districts

These cover the more thickly populated parts of the Province. In size they average about forty townships, the general rule being that if they have less than forty townships, they will have five councillors; if they have more than forty townships they will have seven councillors.

There are one or two exceptions to the above rule. The councillors are elected in such a way that each serves for three years, but there is always a majority of the council on the continuing body. The Reeve

is chosen by themselves from among the councillors, and hold office for one year. All other officials are appointed by the council.

#### 12 Counties

These single-government, multi-purpose units are formed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council upon request by the local authorities concerned. The boundaries of the school division and municipal district are co-terminous, and an elected county council administers all school and municipal matters.

\* \* \* \*

### THE DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

The Department of Municipal Affairs is a "service" department. Dealing with legislation covering the administration of all types of municipalities it gives assistance to municipal officers in conducting local affairs and is generally concerned with the business management and efficient administration of all municipal divisions in Alberta. Hon. A. J. Hooke is Minister of Municipal Affairs and A. W. Morrison is Deputy Minister.

The Department includes the following Branches or Divisions:

#### Municipal Inspection Branch - Bruce Ramsay, Chief Municipal Inspector

The Chief Municipal Inspector and a staff of municipal inspectors examine annually the books and records of all towns, villages, counties and municipal districts in the Province, paying particular attention to their by-laws, budgets, methods of finance and the way they exercise their authority under the various acts. The Branch also looks after any changes in status and boundaries of the municipalities. The Department's Annual Report is compiled and produced in this Branch.

#### Town and Rural Planning - Noel Dant, Director

The Town and Rural Planning Branch is the executive arm of the Provincial Planning Advisory Board, which is charged with the administration of The Town and Rural Planning Act.

One of the chief functions of the Branch is to provide technical assistance on town planning matters to any municipality requesting the service. At no cost to itself, the municipality may obtain expert advice on subjects ranging from the design of road intersections to general plans, official schemes, and zoning by-laws for a 20-year development program. Branch members carry out any field surveys required, which often require months to complete.

The Branch, in addition, examines all plans for the subdivision of land.

#### Assessment Division

(a) Assessment Commissioner - J. B. Laidlaw - prescribes standards and methods of assessment procedure.

(b) Assessment Branch - D. E. Mills, Supervisor. Upon request the supervisor will undertake the assessment of any municipality in Alberta other than a city, or assist a city assessor in a general re-assessment, and absorb 50% of the cost.

(c) Assessment Appeal Board - E. F. Breach, Chairman. The three-member Board hears appeals from ratepayers regarding their assessments after they have been unable to accept the ruling of local courts of revision.

(d) Assessment Equalization Board - J. B. Laidlaw, Chairman. The Equalization Board determines the total assessment on an equalized basis for each municipality as compared with all others throughout the Province.

#### Field Service Branch - A. R. Isbister, Supervisor

This Branch assesses all land in improvement districts and values land for the Tax Recovery Branch. It carries out work for the Administrator of Estates, and the Official Guardian, and also collects a considerable amount of taxes which are remitted by the field man to the accountant at Edmonton. Reports on applications and yearly inspection of Old Age Pensions are also made by inspectors of the Field Service Branch.

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MINISTER



HON. A.J. HOOKE

DEPUTY MINISTER



A.W. MORRISON

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

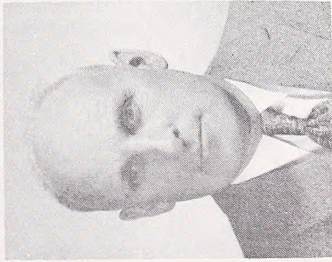
DEPARTMENT OF *MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS*

Assessment Appeal Board and  
Communal Property Control Board



E.F. BREACH  
Chairman

Assessment Equalization  
Board



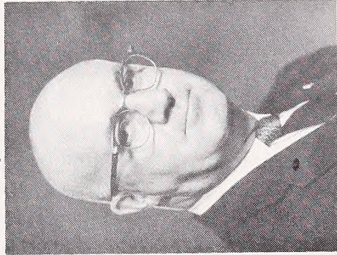
J.B. LAIDLAW  
Assessment Commissioner, Chairman

Assessment Branch



D.E. MILLS  
Supervisor

Field Service  
Branch



A.R. ISBISTER  
Supervisor

Tax Recovery Branch



K.C. SWITZER  
Supervisor

Municipal Inspection  
Branch



BRUCE RAMSAY  
Chief Inspector

Special Areas Board



C.W. EDWARDS  
Chairman

Accounts Branch

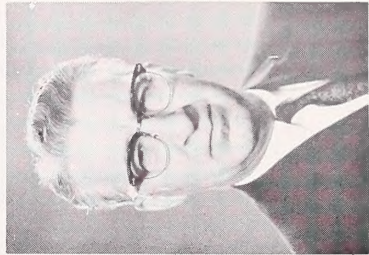


D.R. WATSON  
Secretary-Accountant



W.H. KINSMAN  
Personnel Officer

Liaison Office



R.A. CANTELON  
Editor and Liaison Officer

Town and Rural  
Planning



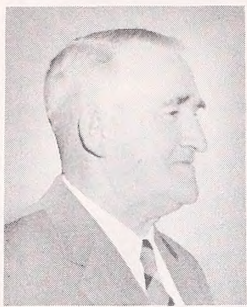
NOEL DANT  
Director

Mechanical  
Accounting Branch



W.G. STEWART  
Chief Supervisor





" . . . A PICTURE OF OUR FINANCIAL APPROACH TO A ROAD BUILDING PROGRAM"

CONCLUSION

# MUNICIPAL ROAD PLANNING

BY D. N. GARDINER, SECRETARY-TREASURER,  
THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ROCKY VIEW NO. 44

AN ADDRESS TO THE CANADIAN GOOD ROADS ASSOCIATION  
IN CONVENTION AT VANCOUVER, SEPTEMBER, 1959

(Last month Mr. Gardiner traced the procedure in getting a road program underway. He concludes below with a consideration of costs and governments grants).

## FINAL APPROVAL FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

We have now arrived at the point where the total recommendations are before the Council, as a body, for final approval. Council, having reviewed these finally, approves those which have to be done in that particular year. Since we are prohibited from dealing with any of our public works expenditures on an Electoral Division basis, the Council has to make an estimate of the general public works expenditures in addition to that recommended for direct road construction. In our particular municipal district we have to add to the road program the costs of repairing our equipment, cost of surveys, Workmen's Compensation Board assessments, road and directional signs, compensation for roads purchased either by agreement or under expropriation, moving of power and telephone lines, maintenance of C.P.R. main line crossings and flasher warning signs installed by order of Board of Transport Commissioners, cost of new machinery or equipment, our general repair shop expense, and the cost of supervision. These costs having been determined are added to the estimated cost of the road program and then fitted in to the rest of the estimated expenditures to see how they will affect the overall estimates of the municipal district. Up to this point the Council has been concerned only with the total overall cost of public works without considering any revenue that may be derived from sources other than taxation.

## THREE TYPES OF GRANTS

So at this point the matter of grants from the Provincial Government are given consideration. Before the date set for consideration of the current estimates, an enquiry has been made to the Department of Highways as to the probable amount that may be available to the municipal district on an agreement basis, or as an outright grant for road construction purposes. In our Province there are three types of grants which do not conflict with each other. First, there is the outright grant made under the Contingency Vote. It provides a definite sum of money to be spent on locations agreed upon between the Minister of Highways of the Province and the Council of the municipal district. Conditions attached to this grant are that the municipal district will supply, free of all charges, utility lines or brush a right-of-way one hundred feet in width. If the road being built under this grant is on an original surveyed road allowance, the statutory 66 feet is considered as being part of the 100-foot right-of-way. Where the road is diverted off the original road allowance, it is still necessary to supply the full 100-foot right-of-way under the conditions set out. The municipal district having supplied the right-of-way, the Province then have their own engineers run the grade line and design the road, supply all drainage structures and have the road built under the immediate direction and supervision of their engineering staff. The effect of such construction is to give the municipality additional roads that otherwise they would not afford to build. It should be mentioned that Contingency Grants are only available on roads that serve people in the whole of the municipal district or in adjoining districts. In effect, they represent an immediate extension of the Provincial highway system but for the fact that after construction they are turned over to the municipal district for permanent maintenance. Continued maintenance of a Contingency Grant road in years subsequent to its construction is a condition of further participation in Contingency Grant funds.

The second type of grant available to municipal districts is the development road or natural resources road grant. It is designed to give relief to a municipal district in which extensive development is being carried out by oil exploration, development of some natural resources such as extensive timber cutting and hauling, or the processing of a natural resource at its site of the hauling of raw materials for processing at a point distant from the source of supply.

A case in point may illustrate the application of this type of grant. Where an extensive timber limit is opened up and is not presently served by a developed local road and would not be served by a local road of the calibre necessary to transport the logged timber to market or mill, then it would be possible to obtain a grant to cover con-

struction of such a road under the Natural Resources Road Regulations. The cost of construction of this type of road is borne 75% by the Provincial Government and 25% by the local municipality. An agreement covering the details is entered into by the municipality and the Minister of Highways.

## MOST USED GRANT

The third and most used grant is that which has literally become an outright grant from the Province to assist municipal units in their annual road construction and maintenance programs. It is shared also on a 75% Provincial share and 25% municipal district share basis. Its amount is determined by a formula which takes into account the mileage of main highways in the municipality, its total assessed value, its population, its stage of development, etc. It was originally designed to ensure the steady development of the district highway system in municipalities, as original conditions were that a minimum of 50% had to be allocated to the construction, reconstruction or major repair of district highways, and then the remaining 50% could be allocated to local road construction.

The real influence of the grant began to be felt on the conclusion of World War II. Prior to that time, and from the time of the passage of The Public Highways Act of 1929, the economy of the Province had suffered through the doldrums of the thirties and the second war. A very fine considerate piece of legislation could therefore not be given scope until the provincial financial picture brightened. Municipalities are grateful that the parent did not neglect the children when Mother Hubbard's Cupboard was re-stocked. As the influence of this type of grant began to be felt and its requirements producing the development of a superior type of road, it soon became evident that to continue to insist on 50% of the grant being spent on district highways as a mandatory obligation would only result in a slowing down of good construction. A change was therefore instituted that permitted an agreed amount being spent on district highway construction, reconstruction, major repair or maintenance, provided that such was approved by the Minister on the recommendation of the local District Engineer. That relaxation has meant that the district highways system has been kept in good shape and at the same time has encouraged municipalities to build better local roads.

It might be well to mention the general specifications set out for district highway construction: A standard section on tangent is a 24-foot finished top with a .4-foot crown, 3:1 side slopes, flat bottom ditch and 1 1/2:1 back slope at road boundary. Standard curve section calls for a 26-foot finished top with a variable super-elevation, depending on circumstances, 3:1 side slopes, flat bottom ditch and 1 1/2:1 back slope at property line. Standard sidehill section shows 12-foot from the intersection of cut to centre line and 13-foot from centre line to edge of fill, cut at 3:1 and the off shoulder slope variable, flat bottom ditch on cut side with catch water ditch if necessary to protect uphill cut. Standard section for fills over 5 feet to be a 26-foot finished top crowned .4 of a foot with side slopes 2:1.

At the same time that these specifications were set, the Department introduced specifications for local roads which had all those of district highways except for width. On standard section on tangent the width was reduced to 20 feet, on a standard side hill section the width was reduced to 21 feet, on standard section for fills over 5 feet the width was reduced to 22 feet and there was introduced a blade grader section for extremely light traffic with a 20-foot finished top, 3:1 side slope, V type ditch with a 1 1/2:1 back slope. Minimum yardage was set at 9,000 cu. yds. to the mile for district highways and 6,000 cu. yds. to the mile for local roads. District highways had a minimum sight distance of 600 feet; maximum gradient of 8%; maximum curvature of 10 degrees; minimum gravel of 600 cu. yds. to the mile, and permanent type culverts to be properly installed.

## SHOCK OF REQUIRED MILL RATE

Having added the cost of public works (including capital out of revenue to be provided for additional or replacement of road equipment) to the other total expenditures and educational costs, and having subtracted the estimated amounts of grants receivable, the Council is ready to consider whether or not the economy of the ratepayer can



## MUNICIPAL ROAD PLANNING

(From Page 6)

stand the shock of the required mill rate. If there appears to be too great an increase over preceding years, and without having had an urgent demand from the electors to incur additional expense, then the Council will again review the estimates, both public works and other controllables, to see if there is any chance of a downward revision. If no further revision can be made without serious sacrifice, the rate is then struck for the year.

As I mentioned before, the increase of grants for public work purposes came after the conclusion of the second war. Introduction of the Municipal Assistance Grant in 1951 and thereafter came as a welcome relief to climbing rates of taxation for general purposes. Municipal Assistance grants were originally tied to a decrease in the rate of taxation from a basic year. Such restrictions have now been removed and the use of the funds is without strings and forms part of the general revenue of the district. Its immediate effect is to reduce the rate of municipal taxation and so pass back to the people relief from taxation. Also, its origin was as a part of the Fuel Oil Tax levied in the Province, but this tie-up has also been abandoned. Our total grants from all sources in 1958 amounted to the sum of \$402,668 and represented approximately 28% of our total budget. If we had had to dig this much more out of our taxpayers, we would have to have had an increase in our rate of taxation of approximately 21 mills.

I have tried to give you a picture of our financial approach to a road building program which so far we have financed entirely from current revenue and grants from the Province. Our need for roads of a relatively high calibre stems from the fact that we have a population density of approximately 5 to the square mile, with an influx from the City of Calgary on week-ends in the summer time and in the fall hunting season of as many more as our total population. Our local people could put up with a much lower class of road if they were the only ones who would be concerned in using them. Since at least an equal number from outside use the municipal roads it does put us on the spot to have usable roads at all times. Only in the last few years did we get authority by which we can regulate speed on some of our roads. Otherwise, we have to face up to building roads that carry the same speed limits as prevail on most provincial main highways. We would be rash indeed to say that all our roads are in that category, but those most frequently used do carry traffic at near highway speeds with safety. It is surely an accomplishment to be able to report that we have some 1,770 miles of road which is fit for travel almost all times of the year on all roads. That, in an area with a population of around 11,000 represents a major accomplishment over the years. The assistance rendered by our provincial authorities is not discounted.

With 113 1/2 miles of main and secondary highways in the municipal district we have the good fortune to be relieved of a great deal

of the heavy transport type of traffic which would normally make it a major task to build roads for. The effect of these highways is to assist us to drain off our heavy hauling from our rural, farm population, from the local and district highways to the hard-surfaced, all-weather roads of the Province. It shortens our road system but makes the shortened system up to a better standard to accommodate the heavier loads which can be transported on the main highways. There is a degree of difference in the load-carrying capacity of the main highways and the local roads, but even then we do have to provide for the maximum loads permissible on our local road system.

## HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP

The relationship existing between the provincial authorities and the local municipal district is one of harmony and mutual confidence. Provincial professional assistance is available to the maximum degree possible consistent with the work which their staff have to do on the main provincial highway system. Our Province has a very acceptable approach to the bridge problem in that they supply all major bridges throughout the Province and turn the casual maintenance of them over to the local authority. Extraordinary maintenance of bridges is done entirely by provincial crews and without expense to the local municipality.

Where services of the provincial engineering staff are not available, the Council engages local professional engineers to carry out survey, design and supervision of major undertakings. The road foreman of the municipality is then under the jurisdiction of the engineer. Otherwise, the Council does not employ an engineer on a full-time basis.

## LOCAL AUTHORITIES MUST NOT LAG

I would like to conclude my remarks with the expression of my own belief that, in a local governmental organization as an almost entirely rural municipal district, in which the basic economy of the district depends on the marketability of agricultural products in a controlled market, government grants in aid of services must continue. They must continue at a higher level than presently exists as provincial authorities have built their main highway system so well, and modern types of transportation are designed for such high class highways, that it is not possible for the local authorities to lag behind. The financial structure of the local authority is not subject to major expansion to keep up with the road demands made on it, so that the only other alternative is continued grants. In my own estimation, provincial highways are so good that the pressure is now on the local level of governments to bring their local road system to an approachable standard similar to that of the Province. Without financial and professional engineering assistance in the payment and building of the local system we cannot attempt to meet the need. I do not think that payment by the provincial creator of the local government to its creation can cause any depreciation in the democratic way of life which we enjoy in Canada. ●

## FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

(From Page 1)

spector; Keith Switzer, Supervisor of Tax Recovery; and D.A. McTavish of the Assessment Branch.

The idea of holding such conferences has been entertained by Mr. Ramsay for some time as a means of supplementing assistance now being given local government authorities by staff members of the Inspection Branch and the Department of Municipal Affairs generally. He envisions several of these conferences being held annually with officials gathering at central points from towns and villages within a radius of perhaps fifty miles. The proposal was outlined in the June issue of The Counsellor and was discussed at some length during the Administration School held at Banff that same month.

It was as a result of the latter discussion that Harry May, Secretary-Treasurer of the Village of Crossfield, undertook the organization of the recent meeting. Credit is due Mr. May for his efforts and to the women of Crossfield who provided lunch for those attending the Conference.

With Mr. Ramsay presiding, the meeting was called to order at 10 o'clock and after a few introductory remarks from the chair, was thrown open for questions. Discussion of many problems was marked with enthusiasm and continued until 4:30 p.m. In addition to the resolution, questions raised included tax recovery procedures, water and sewer rates, discounts for the prepayment of local improvement taxes, policing villages and a proposal that the Provincial Government should assume the full costs of public welfare now falling on Alberta towns and villages.

Those present agreed the conference was a complete success and approved a suggestion to meet again at Crossfield next September. ●

## AIR REMAINS CLEAN

Alberta's naturally clear air remains relatively unspoiled despite the growth of provincial industrial and oil field development, according to an interim report of the Sanitary Engineering Branch of the Alberta Department of Health. The Branch has been conducting a study of air pollution in the Province for the past two years and recently announced the expansion of the program to ensure that air contamination does not become a problem in the future.

Fifty-two air pollution detectors have been in operation in Alberta since 1958, primarily in oil and gas localities. The detectors are sensitive to the presence of hydrogen sulfide and sulfur dioxide.

The report shows the areas of Nevis and Innisfail are subject to appreciable amounts of these gasses which cause an odor nuisance and metal discoloration. A mobile laboratory fitted into a 27-foot trailer has been used in areas of highest concentration to provide an hour by hour measurement of the pollution.

The cities of Edmonton and Calgary are relatively free of the gasses compared with other major Canadian cities who completed surveys in 1956. The reports show a lesser incidence of hydrogen sulfide and sulfur dioxide than Halifax, Montreal, Saskatoon and Trail.

A number of detectors in operation near a fertilizer plant at Medicine Hat indicate a high level of air purity in the district.

Equipment for calculating smoke pollution in Edmonton and Calgary has been installed in the city halls of both centres. Readings indicate an equal level of smoke pollution in the two areas. The concentration of the smoke remains at a low level compared to other Canadian industrial centres. For example, it is about one seventh of the measurement in the Windsor locality. ●



**ALBERTA'S ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

(From Page 3)

made available to the assessor and his municipality. In Alberta the Provincial Assessment Commissioner is vested with extremely broad powers and may, at any time he considers it advisable and in the public interest, cancel the assessment of any property and of course, make a new assessment in lieu thereof. As a rule however, this power is quite jealously guarded and not often implemented. Rather, and where an inspection indicates some adjustment is necessary and if the ratepayer for some good reason has failed to appeal to the courts, we prefer instead to authorize a reassessment by the local assessor.

**IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

Concerning the matter of in-service training it is probably true that the greatest benefit in this regard is derived by assessor personnel attached to the Provincial Assessment Branch. This division under the jurisdiction of a supervisor employs a staff of some fifty assessors and deputy supervisors who carry out reassessment projects when requested by municipalities to do so. The supervisor administers the annual assessment program and formulates the program for in-service training with such training actually done at the deputy supervisor's level. The deputy supervisor introduces the trainee to assessment laws, practices and procedures and works with him in the field. The budding assessor is taught the use of the assessor's manual, something of the principles of economics as well as the use of soil survey maps and aerial photographs. Our in-service training program is further supplemented by an annual short course when lectures on problems of mutual interest are presented for discussion and augmented by field demonstrations. Members of the Alberta Association of Assessing Officers may and often do attend these refresher courses even though the organization conducts its own convention separately when provincial government personnel take an active part in convention proceedings. By these remarks I do not mean to imply that municipal assessors directly employed by municipalities are deprived of the benefits of in-service training for such is certainly not the case. While major cities find it convenient to conduct their own training program, assessor personnel of smaller municipalities may and do work periodically with provincial government assessors engaged on reassessment projects.

**ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLE COURSE**

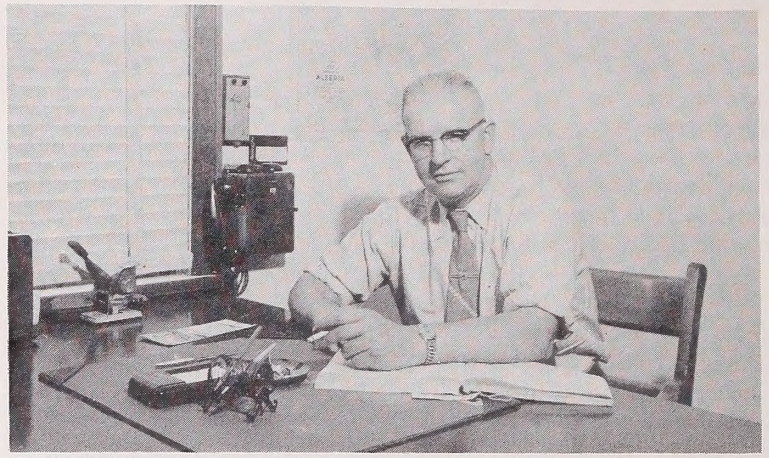
A further recent development in Alberta is the presentation of an Assessment Principle Course sponsored jointly by the Provincial Government and the University of Alberta. This three-year certificate course originated mainly as a result of representations advanced by the Alberta Association of Assessing Officers and other interested parties and was first presented in the fall of 1958. Course material was assembled through dint of much time and effort on the part of committees comprising University, Municipal and Provincial Government Officials. It was quite evident from the start that the University could not be expected to assume the financial burden which this additional service would entail, therefore the Provincial Government agreed to foot the bill.

The course is presently open to any interested person and there are no specific educational prerequisites although the University reserves the right to postpone registration of applicants whose academic standing is considered inadequate. Registration fees amount to sixty dollars per year and by agreement the Provincial Government and the majority of municipal governments refund fees paid by successful students.

Printed lesson material comprising some twenty lessons for each year of the course as well as extensive reference texts is mailed weekly to students in kit form. Monthly seminars are conducted by instructors and held at regional points throughout the Province when lesson and reference material is reviewed and questions arising therefrom discussed and answered. At the conclusion of each term students are required to undertake a written examination with successful candidates then being allowed to advance to the next higher class of instruction.

The lesson material utilized in this course has been prepared by experts in their respective fields with the curriculum ranging from the principles of taxation and appraisal of real estate to the history of local government and interpretation of Statutes. Needless to say, our assessment course has been exceptionally well received with enrolment during each of the first two years going far beyond original expectations.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, I have no doubt our scheme of procedure in Alberta will appear rather unique to many of you present today. I would point out however that it has resulted in our achieving a much higher degree of assessment uniformity than existed heretofore and at the same time has had the effect of inspiring in municipalities and ratepayers a decided feeling of confidence in the ability of those people engaged in the practice of our profession. ●



Gavinchuk Photo

**VETERAN PASSES SUDDENLY**

On September 16, death came suddenly to Roman Michael Antoniuk, 59, Secretary-Treasurer of Smoky Lake Municipal District No. 89, and in years of service one of the senior secretaries in Alberta. Survived by his wife Mary, his son William (a surveyor at Keg River) and two daughters (Mrs. Douglas Thompson of Smoky Lake and Betty who is attending school) Mr. Antoniuk will be long remembered by friends and fellow workers throughout the Province.

Mr. Antoniuk was born in the Ukraine, March 10, 1901. His education started in the old country, he attended schools in Edmonton after which he worked in the post office. His municipal career began as an assistant and on May 2, 1930, he became Secretary-Treasurer of the 10 township Municipal District of Smoky Lake No. 576, retaining the position with the enlargement of the district in 1942.

An interesting sidelight indicating the growth of the position of the district is the fact that Mr. Antoniuk's first budget in 1931 was for \$41,669.21 while his 1960 budget showed municipal revenues of \$319,991.38.

Apart from his work, Mr. Antoniuk's interests included photography, fishing and hunting. He was a charter member of the Smoky Lake Lions Club and at his death was a director of the Association of Municipal District Secretary-Treasurers.

Note: John Skuba, Acting Secretary-Treasurer of the M.D. of Smoky Lake No. 89, writes: "I enclose herewith data which you requested of the late Mr. Antoniuk, with the intention of using same in the 'Long in the Service' column of The Counsellor. This will now have to be used as his obituary." ●

**SECRETARY'S CALENDAR**

Prepare monthly cash statement, Section 67(r) of The Town and Village Act.

**The LOCAL SCENE and The DEPARTMENT**

(From Page 4)

**The Tax Recovery Branch** - K.C. Switzer, Supervisor

The Tax Recovery Act authorizes the sale of land for unpaid taxes. This Branch supervises the enforcement of the Act, and administers land acquired by the Department under the Act. The Local Tax Arrears Consolidation Act, setting out procedures for the payment of taxes which have fallen into arrears, is also administered by this Branch.

**Accounts Branch** - D. Watson, Secretary-Accountant

The Branch prepares estimates, compiles levies, sets up assessment and tax rolls and prepares and issues tax notices for each parvel of land in improvement districts and the Special Areas. It records all money received and makes payments on behalf of improvement districts and the Special Areas. It also collects amounts due to the Province for agricultural advances and other government accounts.

The Equipment Licensing Office is attached to the Accounts Branch. This Office administers The Mobile Equipment Licensing Act on behalf of the municipalities.

**The Mechanical Accounting Branch** - W.G. Stewart, Chief Supervisor

Located in the Natural Resources Building, this Branch, using electrical accounting machines, prepares assessment and tax records for all improvement districts and the Special Areas. It also does work for other government departments, particularly the Department of Welfare and the Examination Branch of the Department of Education.

**The Liaison Office** - R.A. Cantelon, Liaison Officer

This office publishes "The Alberta Municipal Counsellor" each month and carries out special assignments and work designed to strengthen good relations between our local governments and the Department of Municipal Affairs. ●